

# SOLDAT

**(2) The German Soldier  
on the Eastern Front 1943-44**

Gordon Rottman & Stephen Andrew



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# Introduction

## The Eastern Front turning point

It is often said that the defeat of the German 6.Armee and the fall of Stalingrad on 2 February 1943 was the turning point of the war in the East. There can be little doubt that this is true. The massive German casualties, huge losses of supplies and equipment, and the marching off into captivity of 91,000 troops out of the 250,000 originally assigned to 6.Armee was a major blow. Almost as crippling though was what befell on the rest of the German armies on the 1,000-kilometer Eastern Front. Since the 22 June 1941 invasion of the USSR the Germans had suffered thousands of casualties to combat, illness, and disease before the onset of the brutal Russian Winter. Over 400,000 troops were dead, wounded, missing, or captured by the end of 1942 and the worse months of the winter were still ahead. In the north Leningrad was still under siege with little likelihood of falling and in the center Moscow had not quite been reached. In the south the much valued Caucasus oilfields were still out of reach. The drive for Stalingrad had been senseless. To its East was Kazakhstan with little of value. The oilfields were to south, but Armeegruppe Süd had been diverted from this strategic objective to waste itself fighting for Stalin's city.

The first snows appeared in mid-September 1942 and the winter pushed south. Stalingrad experienced its first snowfall on 22 October. Cumulative snows had fallen by early December. Temperatures dropped to -20°F (-29°C) and would fall as low as -60°F (-52°C) at times. A quarter of a million men suffered frostbite and other extreme cold weather illnesses and injuries. The Wehrmacht had been totally unprepared for the Russian Winter of 1942/43, one of the worst in decades. Adequate winter clothing was not available and the Landser suffered unimaginable privations. Under such conditions everything had to be done different. It took more time, more manpower, and more effort, if could be done at all or if the resources were even available to do it. Supply and material shortages were common. The old German Army slogan, "If it is worth doing it is worth over-doing." (Wenn schon, denn schon), could not always be followed.

## The Soldat confronts a challenge

German rifle companies were more often down to 30-40 men. Most of the previously formable Panzer divisions on which the Blitzkrieg relied were now tankless and fought as infantry. Extensive use was made of the large numbers of captured weapons and stocks of supplies. Some were used in such large numbers

that they virtually became standard. At least two actually were standardized. The 76.2mm F22USV field gun was captured in massive numbers. It was used as such or rechambered to use German 7.5cm PaK40 ammunition and modifications were made to improve its use in the antitank role as the PaK36(r). They were issued as a substitute for the PaK40 and saw service as distant as North Africa. They were also fitted on several self-propelled mounts to include many of the Marder self-propelled antitank guns. Another Soviet weapon pressed into German service was the 120mm HM38 mortar. This weapon was so effective that the Germans reversed engineered it and produced it as the 12cm sGrW42.

The Red Army took advantage of the winter situation and launched a massive counteroffensive with fresh and reinvigorated units, often with new weapons. Too, they knew how to cope with the winter weather, how to live in it, and they learned how to fight in it. The Landser did too. He had no other choice. By the winter of 1942/43 great strides had been taken in regards to fielding effective cold weather clothing, accessories, and materials. The special winter clothing was of an entirely new design and later had some influence on modern combat uniforms. The Landser had also learned how to survive in the Russian Winter. In 1942, in time for the coming winter, the German Army High Command published a 372-page "Handbook for the Winter War" (Taschenbuch für den Winterkrieg) filled with effective methods learned the hard way.

With the fall of Stalingrad in February 1943 it signaled the beginning of the end for the Wehrmacht and Nazi Germany. The Red Army, with starts and stops, pushed the Germans back to Berlin, but it would take over 26 grueling, blood-soaked months to accomplish.

## The allocation of infantry weapons

The weapons assigned to a grenadier regiment are well documented. There were of course variants in their allocation and substitute weapons, both of German origin and foreign, as well as the inevitable shortages. What is infrequently studied is how those weapons were allocated and attached to support specific units within the regiment. An understanding of the attachment of crew-served weapon is necessary to accurately replicate tactics in war games, portray accurate dioramas, and to understand tactics. There will always be exceptions owing to the expedencies of combat and the necessity of adapting to the enemy situation, his tactics, the terrain, and even the weather. All in all these deviations were not overly drastic.

The standard doctrine was how commanders at all levels had been trained and how the weapons crews were taught to deploy their tools. Another old German Army adage spelled this out, "Everything must be in order!" (Ordnung muß sein!). This was aimed at putting everything in its place; that everything must be neat and orderly, but its meaning translated to tactics as well. The Germans could expedite, make do with what they had, but they were still guided by their doctrinal traditional.

The crew-served weapons assigned to a grenadier regiment are listed here for reference. We will then discuss their allocation for employment in combat, both offensively and defensively. The Infanterie-Regiment was redesignated a Grenadier-Regiment on 15 October 1942. The regiment's organic companies and smaller subunits retained the Schützen (rifle) designation though. The regimental light infantry column and the battalion and company trains were the rear service elements transporting supplies, baggage, and ammunition, and field kitchens. The terms company troop and platoon troop referred to the company and platoon headquarters. **(A)**

## Lack of organizational standardization

There were differences in organization depending on when a division was raised and from what assets. Many units were raised

<b>(A) Grenadier-Regiment</b>	<b>Grenadier Regiment</b>	<b>Weapons</b>
Regimentsstab	Regimental Staff	
Nachrichtenzug	Signal Platoon	
Reiterzug	Mounted Platoon	
Pionierzug	Pioneer Platoon	
Grenadier-Bataillon (x3)	Grenadier Battalion (x3)	
Bataillonsstab	Battalion Staff	
Schützen-Kompanie (x3)	Rifle Company (x3)	
Kompanietrupp	Company Troop	
Schützengruppe (x3)	Rifle Platoon (x3)	
Zugtrupp	Platoon Troop	1x5cm
Schützengruppe (x4)	Rifle Group (x4)	1xMG
schwere Maschinengewehrgruppe	Heavy Machine Gun Group	2xMG
Panzerbüschengruppe	Antitank Rifle Group	3xAT rifles
Kompanie-Troß	Company Train	
Maschinengewehr-Kompanie	Machine Gun Company	
Kompanietrupp	Company Troop	
Maschinengewehrzug	Machine Gun Platoon (x3)	
Zugtrupp	Platoon Troop	
Maschinengewehrgruppe (x3)	Machine Gun Group (x3)	2xMG
Granatwerferzug	Mortar Platoon	
Zugtrupp	Platoon Troop	
Granatwerfergruppe (x3)	Mortar Group (x3)	2x8cm
Kompanie-Troß	Company Train	
Bataillons-Troß	Battalion Train	
Infanteriegeschütz-Kompanie	Infantry Gun Company	
Kompanietrupp	Company Troop	
leichter Infanteriegeschützzug (x3)	Light Infantry Gun Platoon (x3)	2x7.5cm
schwerer Infanteriegeschützzug	Heavy Infantry Gun Platoon	2x15cm
Kompanie-Troß	Company Train	
Panzerabwehr-Kompanie (motorisiert)	Antiarmor Company (Motorized)	
Kompanietrupp	Company Troop	
Panzerabwehrzug (x3)	Antiarmor Platoon (x3)	4x3.7cm, 1xMG
Kompanie-Troß	Company Train	
leichte Infanterie-Kolonne	Light Infantry Column	

with three rifle groups per platoon and the heavy machine gun group with two machine guns was not present. The three-group rifle platoon became standard. Many units were raised without the platoon 5cm mortar troop or the company antiarmor rifle troop. The largely ineffectual 5cm mortar was withdrawn by late 1943. The antiarmor rifles too were withdrawn. Many infantry gun companies had only two platoons armed with two light infantry guns apiece and no heavy infantry guns. Other regiments substituted a schwere Granatwerfer-Kompanie for the Infanteriegeschütz-Kompanie with eight 8cm mortars and lacked the mortars normally assigned to the battalion machine gun companies. Crew-served weapons production could not keep up with the continuing expansion of the Heer and combat losses. Some regiments were fielded without the infantry gun and antiarmor companies. They had only a single heavy company (schwere Kompanie) with two platoons of two infantry guns each and an antiarmor platoon with four guns. Infantry guns were slow and expensive to produce. In 1942 they began to be replaced by captured Soviet 120mm HM38 mortars and then the German copy. This was especially true on the Eastern Front. The infantry gun company was replaced by a mortar company (Granatwerfer-Kompanie) with two platoons of four each 12cm heavy mortars. Most antiarmor companies went from four to three guns per platoon. Some received 5cm guns in 1940/41, either completely replacing the 3.7cm or just one platoon of 5cm. In 1943 some new regiments had a small light infantry gun company and two antiarmor companies. With the obsolescence of the 7.92mm Panzerbüchse PzB39 antiarmor rifle in 1940 several other weapons were fielded in attempts to replace it and provide the rifle company with a suitably light, mobile, and effective antitank weapon. These included the Granatbüchse GrB39, a much modified PzB39 for launching antitank rifle grenades; the 2.8cm schwere Panzerbüchse sPzB41, a "squeeze-bore" high-velocity weapon reducing the projectile to 2cm; and the 8.8cm Raketenwerfer 43 Püppchen (Dolly), a two-wheeled rocket weapon. None lived up to expectations and they lacked the mobility needed by infantrymen. A breakthrough was made though in 1943 in the form of the 8.8cm Raketenpanzerbüchse RPzB43 more commonly known as the Panzerschreck ("armor terror") or Ofenrohr ("stovepipe"), a scaled up version of the American 2.36-inch bazooka, and the simple single-shot, disposable Panzerfaust-series of recoilless antitank projectors.

#### Infanterie-Division neuer Art 44

In March 1944 the new type infantry division (Infanterie-Division neuer Art 44) made its appearance. Its combat power was greatly reduced owing to manpower and equipment shortages. This provided only two rifle battalions per regiment. The

divisional reconnaissance battalion (Aufklärungs-Abteilung) was converted to a divisional fusilier battalion (Divisions-Füsiliere-Bataillon), essentially a seventh rifle battalion. Now mostly on the defensive and with only two battalions per regiment thus providing no regimental reserve, the Füsiliere-Bataillon served as a divisional reserve and exploitation force. Reconnaissance was not as essential a task in the defense as in the offense. Like Grenadier, Füsiliere was another traditional title revived to instill esprit de corps and increase morale. Through the 1800s fusiliers were employed as skirmishers and scouts for line units. Some Füsiliere-Bataillone were provided increased firepower, especially machine guns, and given bicycles or motorcycles for improved mobility.

While units were smaller, in many categories their firepower was increased, especially in regards to automatic weapons. Smaller units were having to hold wider frontages against massive attacks. The 1944 grenadier regiment's organization is examined here. There were many alternative weapons, especially in regards to antiarmor weapons and mortars substituted for infantry guns as well as shortages meaning that many units were armed and organized somewhat differently. Few of the antiarmor companies were actually provided Marder self-propelled guns, but retained 3.7cm and 5cm weapons. (B)

#### Infanterie-Division 1945

In late 1944 there were further changes to make the most effective use of available infantry crew-served weapons. The Infanterie-Division 1945 (InfDiv 45) was approved in December 1944. Not all divisions were reorganized as most were committed to combat and the time and resources were not available. The grenadier regiments still only had two battalions. The battalions had three rifle companies, which had changed little, and a heavy company with four 7.5cm infantry guns and six 8cm mortars. The regiment's 13.schwere Kompanie possessed two 15cm infantry guns and eight 12cm mortars while the 14.Panzer-Zerstörer-Kompanie (armor destroyer) had 54 Raketenpanzerbüchsen bazooka-type rocket launchers with another 18 in reserve. The idea was to saturate a defended area with dug-in Panzerschrecks backed by Panzerfläuste.

#### Unit designation practices

Companies were numbered in sequence through the regiment with I Bataillon containing 1.-4.Kompanie, II Bataillon with 5.-8., and III Bataillon with 9.-12. The 4., 8. and 12.Kompanien were machine gun companies. The 13.Kompanie was the infantry gun or mortar and 14.Kompanie was the antiarmor. When the

(B) Grenadier-Regiment 44	Grenadier Regiment 44	Weapons
Regimentsstab	Regimental Staff	
Nachrichtenzug	Signal Platoon	
Radfahrerzug	Bicycle Platoon	3xMG
Pionierzug	Pioneer Platoon	6xMG
Grenadier-Bataillon (x3)	Grenadier Battalion (x3)	
Bataillonsstab	Battalion Staff	
Schützen-Kompanie (x3)	Rifle Company (x3)	
Kompanietrupp	Company Troop	
Schützenzug (x3)	Rifle Platoon (x3)	
Zugtrupp	Platoon Troop	1xMG (spare)
Schützengruppe (x3)	Rifle Group (x3)	1xMG
Granatwerfergruppe	Mortar Group	2x8cm
Kompanie-Troß	Company Train	1xMG
Maschinengewehr-Kompanie	Machine Gun Company	
Kompanietrupp	Company Troop	
Maschinengewehrzug	Machine Gun Platoon (x3)	
Zugtrupp	Platoon Troop	
Maschinengewehrgruppe (x3)	Machine Gun Group (x3)	2xMG
Granatwerferzug	Mortar Platoon	
Zugtrupp	Platoon Troop	
Granatwerfergruppe (x3)	Mortar Group (x3)	2x8cm
Kompanie-Troß	Company Train	1xMG
Bataillons-Troß	Battalion Train	1xMG
Infanteriegeschütz-Kompanie	Infantry Gun Company	
Kompanietrupp	Company Troop	1xMG
leichter Infanteriegeschützzug (x3)	Light Infantry Gun Platoon (x3)	2x7.5cm, 1xMG
schwerer Infanteriegeschützzug	Heavy Infantry Gun Platoon	2x15cm, 1xMG
Kompanie-Troß	Company Train	1xMG
Panzerabwehr-Kompanie	Antiarmor Company	
Kompanietrupp	Company Troop	
Panzerabwehrzug (x3)	Antiarmor Platoon (x3)	4xSP AT gun
Kompanie-Troß	Company Train	1xMG
leichte Infanterie-Kolonne	Light Infantry Column	1xMG

regiment lacked the 13. and 14.Kompanien the heavy company was designated 13. In 1939/40 many regiments formed a 15.Pionier-Kompanie. In the new type 1944 and 1945 regiments the two battalions' companies were designated, Bataillon I- 1.-4.Kompanien and Bataillon II- 5.-8.Kompanien. The 4. and 8.Kompanien were battalion machine gun companies or, in the case of the 1945 heavy companies. The regimental infantry gun and antiarmor companies were still designated 13. and 14.

#### Weapons employment

The following discussion of the employment of crew-served weapons within the grenadier regiment focuses on the prescribed doctrine found in manuals. There would be exceptions though based on the tactical situation, terrain, and weather of the moment.

#### Schützenzug

The rifle platoon possessed a 5cm mortar in the platoon troop plus a light machine gun in each of the three rifle groups. In the US and British Commonwealth armies the US rifle squad and British section, 12 and 10 men, respectively, the German rifle group had 10 men; the automatic weapon provided a base of fire to the riflemen. The bipod-mounted, magazine-fed automatic weapon, a Browning automatic rifle or a Bren light machine gun, provided fire support to the riflemen. In the German rifle group the MG34 light machine gun was considered the principal fire weapon and the riflemen support the machine gun.

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All three groups would be on the line; a group was not held in reserve. This applied to the four-group platoon as well, although one group in either case would man the combat outpost line to prevent surprise attacks, warn of the enemy's advance, and keep enemy reconnaissance patrols at bay. When the group was moving in a column formation the machine gun was normally in the forefront behind the group leader. If engaged or deployed to engage the enemy the riflemen would swing into a line to the right or the left as directed by the group leader. The machine gun would remain in-place as it was already firing on the enemy. Depending on in which direction the riflemen deployed, the machine gun would now be positioned on one flank or the other, but with one or two men protecting its flank. In some instances the machine gun was positioned in the rear of the group, especially when moving through close terrain. This prevented the gunner from becoming an immediate causality if ambushed. It was emphasized though that in forest and swamp fighting that the machine guns should be well forward with the riflemen. Fields of vision and fire were limited and machine guns would be of little use in the rear covering the advance. Their automatic firepower would be more valuable if up front even if their sectors of fire and range were limited. In the defense the machine gun would be positioned where it could best cover the group sector or the most likely infantry avenue of approach. Groups on a platoon's flanks might also have to cover a gap between adjacent platoons with their machine gun. Late in the war rifle groups might have one or even two additional machine guns, although the latter was rare.

The 5cm mortar was immediately to the platoon's rear and could be forward with the rifle groups. It was a line-of-sight weapon. There was no capability of observed indirect fire on a target out of the crew's view. The mortars were seldom if ever concentrated in a group to provide centralized fire support. Each rifle group had a rifle grenade launcher capable of launching high explosive, antitank, and special purpose grenades.

#### **Schützen-Kompanie**

The rifle company generally had little in the way of supporting weapons. It relied on the attachment of weapons from the battalion machine gun company and sometimes from regimental assets. The antiarmor rifle group's three rifles or some later antitank weapon could be employed in two manners. One antiarmor rifle might be attached to each rifle platoon, in which case it would be located to cover the most likely tank avenue of approach. They would be positioned to achieve a flank shot if at all possible. Because of these weapon's marginal effect on armored fighting vehicles if the terrain allowed it with sufficient fields of observation and fire they might be positioned together as a group for concentrated fire on individual tanks. This does not mean they were positioned directly adjacent to each other, but maybe five to 15 meters apart under the centralized control of their group leader who would direct their fire.

When Panzerfäuste made their appearance in late 1943 regulations allocated 36 to each rifle and pioneer company. That did not guarantee they would be issued that many; it was a logistical planning guide. On the other hand they might receive more depending on availability and the enemy armor threat. They were also not necessarily parceled out on an equal basis to all platoons. Platoons covering roads and other armor avenues of approach would receive the preponderance. Others might be given to three to six-man armor hunter groups (Panzerjägergruppen) organized from rifle platoon assets. The number of such groups formed depended on the terrain and situation. Besides Panzerfäuste they might be armed with hand and rifle grenades; smoke grenades, pots, cylinders, etc; expedient antitank demolition charges, and incendiary bottles (Molotov cocktails). Machine guns were important to tank hunters for covering fire and used to separate the enemy infantry from their tanks.

In the early war companies possessing a two-gun heavy machine gun group it was usually used to protect an exposed flank or cover a gap with an adjacent company in the defense. In the attack it was available to provide direct long-range fire support on targets such as enemy machine gun nests, suspected enemy positions, and troop concentrations.

In some instances rifle companies were provided an organic 8cm mortar group with two mortars. These were seldom attached individually to platoons, but would provide fire support from the rear as a subunit. As with the 5cm mortars they often engaged line-of-sight targets.

#### **Grenadier-Bataillon**

The machine gun company was the battalion's principal fire support asset. It provided both long-range direct and indirect fires. Within the Heer the terms light and heavy machine had nothing to do with the weapons' weight, it was the role in which they were employed. Heavy machine gun units used the same MG34 or

MG42 as the rifle groups, but they had a six-man crew, a recoil-absorbing tripod, optical sight, coincidence rangefinder, and additional spare barrels permitting sustained fire.

The three six-gun heavy machine gun platoons dealt out a massive amount of firepower. They were intended to attack long-range targets, suppress known or suspected enemy positions, and cover gaps between units and exposed flanks. A full platoon or one or two two-gun groups could be attached to each rifle company and some could be kept under battalion-control. In the defense the guns could be set-up in forward platoon positions or occupy over-watching positions to the rear to provide long-range supporting fire, to include firing over the heads of friendly troops. Especially loaded ammunition was issued that was approved for overhead fire. In a strongpoint defense, common on the Eastern Front, the heavy machine gun platoons would usually be attached directly to the rifle companies manning each strongpoint.

The machine gun company's 8cm mortar platoon had four two-tube groups. They were mostly attached to rifle companies rather than kept under battalion-control. Two groups might support the company executing the main attack. A mortar group would typically be assigned to each company strongpoint.

#### **Grenadier-Regiment**

Two fire support elements were assigned to the grenadier regiment. The infantry gun company might have one of its two-gun 7.5cm light gun platoons in support of each grenadier battalion, but it would not be uncommon for two platoons to support the main attack battalion along with the two-piece 15cm heavy gun platoon. Because of the simple fire control procedures used with infantry guns the heavy gun platoon would not be assigned a general support mission for the entire regiment. Infantry guns could deliver indirect fire similar to a mortar making them ideal for attacking targets on reverse slopes, but they could also deliver direct fire against pillboxes and other positions. The light guns were ideal for this. When 12cm heavy mortars began to replace the infantry guns the direct fire capability was of course lost, but they provided excellent indirect fire support and had a significantly longer range than the 8cm mortar; 6,050 meters as opposed to 2,400 meters.

The antiarmor company had three three- or four-gun platoons with 3.7cm and/or 5cm guns. In the attack most of the guns were held in reserve to be positioned to engage counterattacking tanks. A few individual guns would follow close behind the attacking battalions for immediate use if enemy armor appeared, to cover armor approaches from the flanks, and to be brought forward for direct fire against strongpoints, pillboxes, and defended buildings. In the defense antiarmor guns were dug-in and well camouflaged with one or two prepared alternant positions. They were positioned in twos or threes with individual guns 10-30 meters part and in depth throughout the regimental sector. A few guns might be detailed to the forward outposts to engage approaching armor at long range. Most would wait until the tanks were within 150-300 meters.

An organic or attached pioneer company would support the regimental attack with platoons reinforcing the main attack battalion. They would assist in breaching obstacles, attack strongpoints and pillboxes with demolitions and flamethrowers, clear mines and booby traps, and make quick minor repairs to bridges. In the defense they would assist with setting up barbed wire barriers, simple obstacles, and lay minefields. Most of the real work of erecting barbed wire was carried out by rifle platoons. The pioneer company, armed similar to a rifle company to include light machine guns, could be used as a regimental reserve. This was especially true in the two-battalion regiments. The regimental mounted or bicycle platoon was used for local scouting and as couriers.

Little in way of support was attached directly to the regiment from division. An artillery battalion would be in direct support of a grenadier regiment, but it generally remained under division control. It could be under regimental control if conducting a semi-independent mission. Very seldom would an artillery battery be attached to a grenadier battalion, unless on a detached mission, which was seldom. Divisional antiarmor battalion guns would seldom be attached to a regiment. They were mostly be held under division control and positioned in depth in positions to block armor breakthroughs. Radio and telephone teams from the signal battalion would be attached to the regiment as would small medical elements.

\* \* \*

The war on the Eastern Front was a much larger and more desperate effort than the war against the Western Allies. Its cost to Germany far exceeded that on all other fronts combined.



Troops wearing reversible winter suits prepare to move out to block a roadblock obstacle. One carries a 3-kilogram TNT concentrated charge (Geballte Ladung 3-kg). This zing-encased charge measured 7.5cm x 16.5 x 19.5cm (2.95 x 6.50 x 7.70 inches) and is painted dark green with a white "3kg" on the side. In the background is a whitewashed 7.5cm StuG. III assault gun.



Snow skis (Schneeski) were an ideal means of cross-country movement and only required a few days training. Anti-partisan units also used skis. Issue skis may have been natural wood-colored or white with a faint green strip running from the toe to the boot binding or its full length. Here some troops hitch a ride on assault guns as others hang on to be towed. Snowshoes (Schneeschuhe) were also used.





Ski troops hitching a ride on an assault gun. The officer with the whitewashed binoculars wears the color of the day arm strip and carries three-pocket machine pistol magazine pouches. The antenna of a back-packed radio is erected and in this case can be operated on the move.

Ski troops settle into a wagon. White-painted ski retained natural wood undersides as they required to be waxed to ensure a smooth glide and to prevent snow from sticking and building up. The MP40 machine pistol has been whitewashed. Notice the different styles of mittens. Any form of winter garments were used with many non-standard makes issued.







The machine gun troop relocates moving down a former Soviet trench. The MG34 and MG42 both used the same metallic-linked belt. These were recovered by the crew as ammunition was issue in carton and replacement belts were in short supply. While large numbers of MG42s were issued and priority went to the Eastern Front, mysteriously, few are seen in photographs.



This NCO wears the two-piece snow suit (Schneeanzug) with color of the day armbands on both sleeves. He also wears one of the many types of fur caps. His MP40 machine pistol magazines may be carried in inside pockets. Note that ski poles were also white.



A well concealed MG34 machine gun position. Locating it next to two knocked out Soviet KV-1 tanks was not a good idea though as they provided an excellent landmark for an observer to reference the machine gun position to and relay firing directions to his own gunners. Sometimes though selection of a machine gun's position could not be helped and less than ideal positions had to be occupied.





Riding on an exposed vehicle in the Russian Winter, here a combination motorcycle, required protective clothing. This Kradfahrer wears a sentry's fur-lined overcoat, heavy mittens, the fur-lined cap of the reversible winter suit, which is no doubt being worn beneath the overcoat, and a gasmask for face protection. The air filter canister has been removed from the gasmask 38. Special extra eyepiece lens were issued for cold weather to prevent fogging by creating an airspace between the two lens.



Two Waffen-SS men erect a dummy Pz.Kpfw.III tank made of wood and painted canvas. One problem with the use of such decoys was that fake track marks had to be made unless there was a recent heavy snowfall. Both side made wide use of decoy vehicles and positions in deception efforts.



A team effort is undertaken to move a 3.7cm PaK35/36 antitank gun up a short slope. Under winter conditions it could be expected to take twice as long to accomplish just about any task and required at least a third more manpower. In the background are two If.8 infantry carts drawn in tandem by a single horse.





Advancing German troops inspect a damaged Soviet 45mm M1937 or M1942 (longer barrel) antitank gun. These were licensed copies of the 3.7cm PaK35/36 and were first produced as the 37mm M1930 and M1932. They were re-barreled to 45mm so they could fire a more effective high explosive round. The Soviets desired their weapons to be more multi-purpose. The Germans captured large numbers in 1941-42 and pressed them into service as the 4.5cm PaK184(r) and PaK184/1(r).



A 3.7cm PaK35/36 crew readies for action. The gun was provided with armor-piercing-tracer, improved armor-piercing, high explosive-tracer rounds. Even with the improved armor-piercing rounds (AP40 with tungsten core), it could only penetrate just under two inches of armor at 400 meters. Ammunition was carried in reusable 12-round metal cases. The armor-piercing rounds had black projectiles and the high explosive gray. The gun was served by a six-man crew.



Grenadiere stand beside a Soviet T-34/76 tank. The reversible winter suit was designed to be loose fitting enough to allow the Lander's equipment to be worn under the jacket. This protected ammunition and canteens from the extreme cold. It seldom was as it had to be readily accessible for use. The loose fitting jacket though provided room for additional underclothing such as sweaters and allowed freedom of movement.



Landers explore a burned out T-34/76. The Tridsatschidurie (Thirty-Four), as the Soviets called it, was a formidable weapon, not just because of its armor protection, but because they were deployed in large numbers as all else Soviet. These Landers wear the color of the day armbands on both arms. More commonly it was worn only on one. Known colors were red, blue, and green.



A grenadier has cut a firing slot with his entrenching tool through a trench parapet. Frozen snow 40-80cm (15.75-31.50 inches) thick would stop a bullet. Twice as much loose snow was required to do the same. While the T-34/76 appears to be in a supporting position, it is most likely a knocked out tank.





Troops carry machine gun ammunition forward in metal cans. The Patronenkasten 41 held six standard 50-round belts linked together (300 rounds) or a single 250-round belt. Like the belts the cans were issued to units and were not considered discardable. Normally field gray, they were sometimes painted other colors for more effective camouflage. Here some have been whitewashed.



A rifle platoon moves forward. In the foreground the machine gunner carries a 7.92mm MG42. Because of the extensive use of stampings this weapon could be produced much faster and at a lower cost than the MG34; made expensive use of machined parts. The MG42's rate of fire was 1,100-1,200 rounds per minute, a sound like ripping paper. The MG34 fired 800-900 rounds per minute. The various Soviet light and heavy machine guns all fired 500-600 rounds per minute.



A grenadier, wearing the water-pattern camouflage reversible winter suit, loads a 3cm rifle high explosive grenade (Gewehr Sprenggranate) into a cup-type dischargers (Schießbecher). Besides the standard explosive grenade with a 265-yard range there were two later long-range versions, the 500-yard range rifle high explosive grenade, long-range (Gewehr Sprenggranate, Weitschuss) and the 711-yard range rifle high explosive grenade with increased range (Gewehr Sprenggranate mit gesteigerter Reichweite). These required special launcher cartridges. These small grenades were not too effective as they contained only a 1.1 ounce charge of penthrite and generated limited fragmentation. This same launcher was used for the several types of antitank grenades.

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This MG34 light machine gun position (Schützenloch für leichtes Maschinengewehr) is revetted by vertical planks. Small one-man dugouts are located at both ends of the position. On the forward side was a 20cm deep U-shaped platform for the bipod-mounted gun. Spoil was removed to hide the position.



Landser explore knocked out Soviet T-34 and KV-1 tanks. Disabled tanks, unless utterly destroyed or burned out, were searched for anything of use such as rations, water, first aid items, blankets, grenades, and maps. Captured Soviet maps were valuable not only for intelligence purposes, but simply because they were more up to date than most German maps and there were never enough maps available at the small unit-level.



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Two Landsers examine a knocked out KV-1 heavy tank. While armed the same as the T-34, it was in some ways a more dangerous opponent owing to its heavier armor. It was a somewhat slower vehicle though.



A snow camouflage-suited Landser examines a knocked out KV-1 tank, probably looking for souvenirs. While the T-34 was a much feared tank, the first models from early 1940 mounted a 76mm gun. The 85mm gun-armed T-34 did not appear until mid-1944. The KV-1 mounted an 85mm gun from mid-1943 replacing its 76mm gun in use since 1939.



A rifle company passes over a bridge rebuilt by pioneers. The truck is a Krupp-Protze L2H 43 (Kfz.70). A whitewashed T-34 rests in the foreground. In recent years surprising numbers of German and Soviet tanks have been found in Russia that had fallen though ice-covered rivers and lakes. There are usually found near the shore as they attempted to skirt the obstacle and perhaps use banks for cover. It was difficult to determine where the ice began on the snow-covered terrain.

Two Landsers take up a position behind a large boulder. The man to the left is armed with a 7.92mm MG34 machine gun. The carbine-armed assistant machine gunner (Maschinengewehr-Schütze) carries a small entrenching tool (kleines Schanzzeug) on his left hip. Both are clothed in the reversible insulated winter uniform. Over the assistant gunner's right shoulder can be seen a knocked out T-34 tank.



Wearing the white-side out of the reversible winter uniform (umkehrbarer Winteranzug). The reverse side with either light gray or was printed with a three-color camouflage pattern. The Landser to the right wears the fur-lined cap issued with the winter uniform. The second man wears a non-standard fur cap. Two men wear face protectors. Sun goggles helped prevent snow blindness from the brilliant glare off of snow. The far man is armed with a 9mm MP40 machine pistol while the second has a Soviet 7.62mm PPSH-41 submachine gun, what the Germans called the MP 717(r).



An MG34-armed machine gunner (Maschinengewehr-Schütze), called the "trigger" (Abzug), as in "triggerman," he was burdened with the weapon's 26.5-pound (11.42-kilogram) weight, replacement parts kit (Ersatzstücketasche 34), and at least 50 rounds of ammunition along with the same personal gear as carried by other troops. He wears a coat-like snow camouflage coveralls (Schneetarn Überzug).





Assault troops await the order to attack in a shallow trench. They wear one-piece snow camouflage coveralls (Einteilige Schneetarn-Überzüge) and whitewashed helmets. The man in the foreground, probably a group (squad) leader (Gruppenführer), is armed with a 9mm MP40 machine pistol and bears colored identification bands on his arms. The colors would be changed as would the arm on which they were worn on a daily basis to delude the enemy who might try and infiltrate German lines wearing similar bands.



A battle patrol (Kampftruppe) sets off across the steppe. They are wearing field gray greatcoats and no snow camouflage. They would be extremely conspicuous on the broad flat expanse of snow. While called field gray (Feldgrau), it was predominately a warm green shade. It was not until late in the war that fabric of a more grayish tone appeared—Feldgrau 44.



Two greatcoat-clad Landser ride on a Pulk, a small sled pulled by hardy little Russian Bashkir pony. Pulk is often attributed as being a Russian word, but it is Finnish. Russian for sled is Sáni. The Germans relied extensively on these sleds and ponies for moving supplies and equipment forward. Motorized vehicles were impossible to use in the deep snow, even if they had fuel and would have started.



Transport troops lead two-horse-drawn sleds to the front. Seldom did service troops receive the insulated winter uniform; there were not enough for the combat troops. These Fahrer wear standard greatcoats and fur caps. The snow made the movement of all supplies and equipment by sled necessary.

A Waffen-SS anti-aircraft gun crewman loads cartridges into the 20-round magazine of a 2cm Flak38. Individual rounds were contained in compressed paper tubes packed in 100-round boxes. 2cm ammunition included high explosive, high explosive-tracer, incendiary-high explosive-tracer, armor-piercing-high explosive, and armor-piercing-high explosive-tracer. He wears the Waffen-SS version of the insulated winter suit.



The Kfz.12 mittlerer geländegängiger Personenkraftwagen (medium cross-country personnel car) was used by motorized infantry units. For such a heavy (almost 3 tons), and large vehicle it only carried four men. It was also used for towing light antitank and light infantry guns. This Kfz.12 is serving as a corps commander's vehicle signified by the 30x40cm flag—the upper triangle is black, the lower red, and the ends white.



Grenadiere move through a burning Soviet city littered with debris and abandoned Soviet equipment. German service units would collect up the usable equipment once the combat moved on. Usable equipment would be pressed into German service or cannibalized for parts. Less useful equipment was destroyed.







A unit's memorial service in remembrance of fallen comrades. Fresh pine boughs cover the ground. The fallen's names are inscribed on a wooden plaque beside an eternal flame. Honor guards would remain at their post for the duration of the ceremony.

A formation's attention is diverted as a pup runs by, probably the unit mascot. Pistol-armed soldiers habitually carried the holster on the left side with the pistol grip forward allowing a cross-draw using the right hand.



On 15 October 1942 Hitler decreed that all infantry regiments would be redesignated as Grenadier-Regimenter and Schützen (riflemen) would be re-titled Grenadiere (grenadiers). This was an effort to improve the flagging morale of his worn-out infantry. Grenadier regiments were considered elite units in the Imperial Army. The Landser to the left is an Obergrenadier (senior grenadier); the star insignia on his sleeve can just be seen. The hand grenade was a favorite weapon of the Landser, here a stick hand grenade 1924 (Stielhandgranate 24—Stg24).

Grenadiers charge across a street littered with the blasted debris of a Russian village. One appears to be armed only with a stick hand grenade. The Landser in the lead is armed with a Soviet 7.62mm Tokarev SVT-50 semi-automatic rifle, what the Germans called a SIGew259(r). Captured in large numbers, it was a popular weapon for increasing small unit firepower.







The core of the German rifle group or squad (Schützengruppe) was the machine gun troop (Maschinengewehrtrupp) manned by the machine gunner (Maschinengewehr-Schütze), assistant machine gunner (Maschinengewehr-Richtschütze), and ammunition man (Munitionsschütze). The machine gun troop was under the direct control of the group leader (Gruppenführer). The Unteroffizier with a leather report/map case (Meldekartentasche 35) is seen here to the left of the 7.92mm MG34 machine gun. These troops carry their gear on the combat equipment for infantry rifle companies (Gefechtsgepäck für Infanterie Schützenkompanien), a web frame assembly fastened to support straps (suspenders) to which cook pot—mess kit (Kochgeschirr 31), shelter quarter (Zeltbahn), and small bag of personal items were fastened. This was by no means issued to all units.



Waffen-SS troops wear their distinctive camouflage smocks and helmet covers. The silver runic SS lightning bolts on black tabs can be seen on their right collars. A wide variety of camouflage patterns were issued by the Waffen-SS.



Waffen-SS Panzertruppen officers with their silver-piped, death head (Totenkopf) adorned black armor caps (Panzermütze) studied a map while coordinating an attack. The second officer from the right is a SS-Hauptsturmführer, equivalent to a Heer Hauptman (captain). The leather oval items are binocular (Doppelfernrohr or Fernglas) eyepiece protective covers.



An SS-Rottenführer, equivalent to a Heeres Stabsgefreiter, replaces a scarce inner tube into his truck's tire. He wears the same black shoulder straps as lower ranking enlistedmen (probably with the light blue piping of the supply troops or light pink of the transport troops), the silver, or gray, on black double chevrons identifying his specific rank (also indicated by his left collar tab), and the silver on black Waffen-SS eagle on his left upper sleeve and the left side of his universal field cap (Einheitsfeldmütze 43). Over his left breast pocket is what appears to be the white-striped black ribbon of the World War I Iron Cross. On his cuff he wears the Bronze Driver's Qualification Badge (Bronze Kraftfahrbewährungsabzeichen), the lowest grade, above the Totenkopf armband identifying him as a member of 3.SS-Panzer-Division "Totenkopf." Badges, medals, and rank insignia were called Lametta (tinsel).



These may be Waffen-SS troops based on the design of the smock's cuff worn by the man in the foreground, even though a camouflage pattern is not apparent. He wears a folding spade (Klappspaten) with a S84/98 sidearm (Seitengewehr) attached to the leather carrier by the leather frog or sidearm carrier (Seitengewehr tasche). The term bayonet (Bajonett) was seldom used. The US Army copied this entrenching tool in 1943.



A Leutnant reports the situation to his higher headquarters via a field telephone 33 (Feldfernsprecher 33). This set weighed 12 pounds. It operates on the ground-return principal. Instead of two wires, only a single-wire line was used. Between the telephone and the carbine can be seen a rod with a grip handle stuck in the ground and connected to the telephone by a short wire. This took the place of the second wire. Damp ground improved transmission range.



A Schützenzug (rifle platoon) passes through an abandoned Russian village. The machine gunner brings up the rear of a Schützengruppe (rifle squad), a common practice. If the group was taken under fire the gunner would not be lost to the first enemy fire if in front. He could move to the most favorable position to provide fire support.



Landsers checkout a Soviet bunker they have destroyed. The Gefreiter is most likely a machine gunner. He is armed with a 9mm Luger P08 pistol. This was a rare weapon late in the war having largely been replaced by the Walther 9mm P38. Every fifth round in the two 50-round machine gun belts is an armor-piercing-tracer identified by a black bullet tip and a red ring around the primer. German tracers burned white or red.





A Leutnant platoon leader (Zugführer) armed with an MP40 machine pistol scans the route his platoon will advance over. Few platoons were actually led by lieutenants owing to officer shortages. Most were led by NCOs. Summer weather made wool uniforms uncomfortable and sleeves were rolled up, something that would have never happened in peacetime. The Wehrmacht eagle decal was ordered removed from the helmet's left side on 28 August 1943. It was often simply left on until it wore off or was repainted. The tricolor Reich shield had been ordered removed on 21 March 1940 for camouflage purposes.



This Gefreiter, with a stick hand grenade at the ready, wears the standard steel helmet (Stahlhelm 34) with mud smeared on it to eliminate any glare. Various measures were taken to eliminate glare and break up the helmet's distinctive silhouette. The steel helmet was considered as a piece of equipment rather than a uniform item. It was issued in five sizes. The Kar98k carbine was known as the soldier's bride (Soldatenbraut).



Another view of the same Gefreiter. He has armed his grenade by pulling the friction-igniter in the end of the handle. It had a 4-5-second delay. He wears the Infantry Assault Badge (Infanterie-Sturmabzeichen) on his left breast pocket. Being silver indicated he was in a grenadier unit. Motorized infantry received a bronze version. In the background a Russian log cabin burns, what the Germans called an Isba, a borrowed Russian term.



Undoubtedly a posed photograph of two Landers with mud-smeared helmets. The man to the left is an Obergrenadier. Soldiers were generally promoted to this rank after a year, but could be promoted directly to Gefreiter. The grenadier's shoulder strap displays the white piping Waffenfarbe of the infantry.



An 8cm mGw34 mortar troop delivers fire in support of the advance from a back garden. The mortar's extreme elevation indicates the target is very close. A grenadier battalion's machine gun company possessed a mortar platoon with six 8cm mortars along with its three heavy machine gun platoons (six machine guns each). Note the white stripe painted on the tube as an auxiliary direct aiming aid in event the optical sight was damaged.





A Feldwebel (field sergeant), probably the Zugführer of a Panzerjägerzug, relaxes behind a 3.7cm PaK35/36 Panzerabwehrkanone. Beyond the Feldwebel are a stack of stick hand grenades, 3.7cm ammunition cans, the crew's carbines, and other equipment. Obsolescent by 1940, the Türklopfer (doorknocker), as the Landsers called it, remained in service through the war. It was also known as the Panzeranklopfgerät (armor-knocker equipment).

A young Unteroffizier leads his group through an approach trench to lead the assault and cut through barbed wire obstacles, a deadly assignment. His MP40 machine pistol is slung on his chest. The Unteroffizier and the Landsers following him carry short wire-cutters (kurze Drahtzange). The handles were insulated from electrical shock.



An artificer brazes a damaged vehicle part with a blowtorch. Note this sunglasses used for eye protection. His identity tag (Erkennungsmarke) is worn around his neck. Both halves bore the individual's unit designation, unit roster number, and blood group. If killed the bottom half of the tag was broken off and turned into the unit and the other remained with the body. The Landsers referred to it as a Hundemarke (dog tag).

## Gefreiter (Pionier Bataillon), 86.Infanterie-Division, Kursk Salient, July 1943

Regarded as specialists of the division, these infantrymen were expertly trained in assault techniques and in the use of all types of weapons and equipment. Their primary task was to pierce the enemy defenses or fortifications. In a secondary role they were used in construction (building fortifications, bridges and laying minefields). Another role in the years of retreat was in demolition (destroying objectives of military importance or laying booby-traps).

This assault pioneer wears an M35 steel helmet with a 'make shift' sackcloth helmet cover. The uniform is like any other infantryman's apart from the black branch color piping on the shoulder straps. The field uniform consists of the M41 field blouse (similar to the M40 type, but now with a 6 button front). Sewn on the right breast is the national emblem and on the collar are army collar M38 Litzen (for all branches) insignia. On his left arm is a Gefreiter rank chevron. Under his field blouse he wears an M42 collared shirt. The service trousers are M42 'Keilhose' type fitted into a pair of M39 short shaft marching boots.

Pioneers' equipment and weapons varied (carrying as much or as little) depending on the mission. In this case he is laden with M24 stick grenades carried in canvas grenade bags (a common item for these troops), also tucked into his belt are long model wire cutters. He is issued with standard rifleman's equipment; the

M1939 infantry leather support straps, two K98 ammunition pouches and S84/98 bayonet. Out

of view are the M1931 bread bag, M1931 field flask, and the gasmask in its late type M1938 metal canister.

He is holding the Gewehr 41(w) semi-automatic rifle (manufactured in limited numbers and the precursor to the Gewehr 43).





## **Oberfeldwebel (Panzer Abteilung), 10.Panzergrrenadier-Division, Rumania, May 1944**

The Panzer Battalion inherent to Panzergrrenadier Divisions was mainly made up of assault guns (Sturmgeschütze) rather than panzers. This senior NCO is wearing the standard issue uniform worn by assault gun troops.

Introduced in May 1940, the uniform consisted of a jacket and trousers cut to the same design as the black panzer uniform but made of field grey cloth. A grey shirt and black tie were mandatory with this uniform. Although this field grey special clothing (Sonderbekleidung) was originally for assault gun troops, regulations were expanded in 1943 to include other branches in armored vehicles (including Panzerjäger, Panzergrrenadiers, Panzerpioniere, etc).

The field jacket was double breasted and came down only to the hips. Insignia on the uniform consisted of the national emblem (sewn on a lower right breast position) and distinctive collar patches- a field grey lozenge-shaped badge cloth with artillery red piping (waffenfarbe). Usually sewn onto the lozenge badge was the army collar Litzen insignia. The shoulder straps denote his senior NCO rank and they are also piped in the red branch color. Attached to his jacket is the 2nd class Iron Cross ribbon and general assault badge. Under his jacket is an M43 cloth shirt.

The field trousers had scalloped single buttoned flaps and the trouser legs were of a generous cut with a tie tape fastening at the bottom. His headwear is the popular M43 field cap. The footwear is lace up ankle boots (standard issue since January 1941 with panzer and assault gun uniforms).

This senior NCOs equipment is the army enlisted man's leather belt and a P38 pistol in its 'hardshell' holster. Outside his vehicle on a 'recon' mission, he has equipped himself with a pair of 6x30 field binoculars and is armed with an MP40; two extra magazines are tucked into his belt.



## Panzergranadier, 19. Panzer Division, Poland, September 1944

This figure shows the late war appearance in certain panzergranadier regiments. The most common camouflage items used by the army in 1944 were the M31 (Zeltbahn) shelter quarter (worn as a poncho), the winter suit clothing and netting or wire configurations for the helmet. Splinter camouflage helmet covers and smocks were manufactured in limited numbers and predominantly issued to panzergranadiers and snipers.

His M42 steel helmet is fitted with wire mesh to hold foliage. The camouflage smock is the 2nd type, which differs from the earlier version in having an attached hood (which could easily go over the helmet). It was designed to eliminate the need for the camouflage helmet cover; in general the grenadier preferred a separate helmet cover. Another characteristic of this smock was the altered splinter camouflage (in marsh pattern 43 or 44).

Under his M43 hooded smock he wears the new style infantry uniform for this period, the M43 field blouse with its familiar plain pockets, straight cut pocket flaps and 6 button front. Seen on his collar is the late pattern mouse grey Litzen insignia. The service trousers are the M43 belted model, similar to the

M42 'Keilhose' trouser except for an inbuilt fabric belt and no cloth reinforcement seat. Canvas gaiters and lace up ankle boots are worn.

He carries the multi purpose MG42 with the machine gunner's equipment attached to his belt, the late model MG42 toolbox in tan 'Press-Stoff', the P38 pistol in its 'softshell' holster, a folding shovel and M31 field flask clipped onto the M31 bread bag.

Canvas infantry support straps are worn; army panzergranadiers were not officially issued these due to their equipment being carried in mechanized transport.

However photographic evidence shows many 'acquired' this useful piece of equipment either in its leather or canvas types.





## Unterfeldwebel, 561.Volksgrenadier-Division, East Prussia, Winter 1944-45

The Peoples Grenadier Division was duly named in an attempt to increase the morale and fighting spirit in these newly created formations. Rather than fully replenishing and rearming the battle worn infantry divisions, most divisions were downsized in structure and in manpower in 1944. Moreover Hitler wanted new army infantry divisions; these new soldiers (with an average age of 17 to 19) were supplied mainly from Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe personnel. They were trained and led by experienced frontline NCOs and Officers. Their rifle companies would be supplied with the most modern automatic weapons including the MP44 assault rifle and the Gew 43 self-loading rifle.

This Volksgrenadier NCO wears the 'general issue' (reversible padded jacket and padded trousers) winter uniform. This model is a recycled early type (with M31 splinter camouflage). It does not have the reinforced elbow patches, knee patches and improved trouser-closing flap of the later models. He shows the white side of the jacket but has kept the trousers on the camouflage side due to a winter thaw. The white side of the winter suit was easily soiled in combat conditions (especially the trousers). As a heavy padded garment it was not easy to clean and dry in the winter months. Winter protection for the hands is a pair of woolen gloves. His M42 steel helmet has been painted over with whitewash.

Under this winter suit he wears the M43 field blouse, M43 service trousers and an M42 high turtleneck sweater. In this instance no winter boots have been issued, the footwear is the common gaiters and lace up ankle boots.

This Volksgrenadier's equipment is: the army enlisted man's leather belt, M1939 infantry leather support straps, two MP44 magazine pouches, a folding shovel and S84/98 bayonet. Out of view are the M1931 bread bag, M1931 field flask, M31 mess kit and M31 (Zeltbahn) shelter quarter.

His weapons comprise of an M1943 stick grenade, MP44 and the Panzerfaust 60.





A motorcyclist (Krautfahrrad, or simply Kradfahrer) repairs his motorcycle's tire and prepares to remount it. While useful for couriers (Kradmelder), reconnaissance troops, and mobile rifle units in Europe, the motorcycle was worthless in the Russian Winter and the "bottomless" spring and fall mud. The motorcycle's registration number is black on white plate. "WH" stands for Wehrmacht Heer—Defense Forces Army.

Many of the panzer divisions lost most of their tanks and no replacements were forthcoming. Dismounted tankers were employed as infantry. There were no spare uniforms, steel helmets, or infantry equipment. Tankers fought wearing their conspicuous black uniforms, often helmetless, and makeshift bedrolls and packs, and what rifles and other arms they could collect.



Bread was a staple of the Landser. Loaves of bread are removed from an Sd.Ah.106 four-wheel bakery trailer. Such a bakery could bake 160 loaves of bread every two hours. A divisional bakery company had five such trailers. They could turn out almost 10,000 loaves in 24 hours. The oven could be fueled by coal or wood. This trailer is set-up under a shelter.



A special treat, locally commandeered milk is distributed to the troops. The Germans took everything from the Russian peasants leaving only sunflower seeds, which the Germans despised as being fit only for the peasants. Commandeered milk cans were sometimes used to distribute soup to the troops.





A small field kitchen (Feldküche) moves forward with the troops. The Landser knew it as a goulash cannon (Gulaschkanone) or as a fodder cannon (Futterkanone) owing to its stovepipe, which is hidden behind the driver. On the driver's seat is an insulated ration container. One man could operate the field kitchen and it could continue to operate on their move. Every attempt was made to provide two hot meals a day.

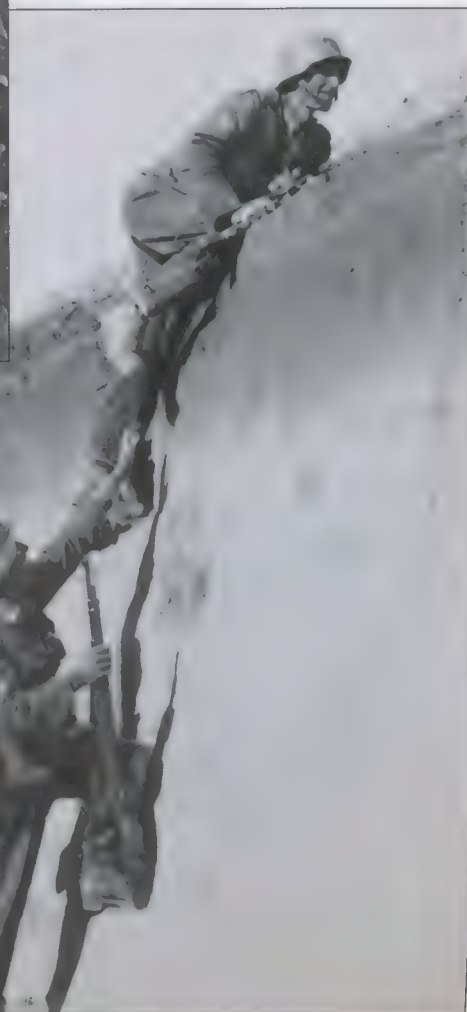


Soldierly bearing and distinction had its limitations when it came to practicality in the field, to including the commandeering transport. The canvas satchel-like bags in the carriage are clothing bags (Bekleidungssack). These held spare clothing and personal items not carried in the backpack and bread bag. They were usually carried in the company baggage train.

Landers stand helplessly by while awaiting a towing vehicle to extract them. The unit insignia is on the truck's right fender. The insignia is too faint to identify the specific unit, but it appears to be a Gothic "L," possibly representing a "Lehr" (demonstration) unit. While the notched shield design was used by some Waffen-SS formation, the collar tabs and breast eagles indicate these soldiers are Heer. Such insignia were commonly applied in white or dark yellow. It appears that this vehicle was whitewashed and the original field gray base color still backs the insignia.



Eingraben—digging in. Landers use their entrenching tools to dig hasty slit trenches (Stichgraben). The soldiers called this an armor grave (Panzergrab), the place they would die if overrun by tanks. Digging in was essential owing to massed Soviet artillery and air attack.



Three NCOs scale the side of a former Soviet antitank ditch while scouting out enemy positions. They have hacked hand and footholds in the steep sides. Antitank ditches provided effective obstacles for tanks. Seldom would tanks be foolish enough to attempt them. They did provide cover and concealment to attacking infantry though. They would have to be protected by anti-personnel mines, barbed wire obstacles, automatic weapons, and mortars and artillery registered on them and their approaches.





A Soviet prisoner is allowed to enter German lines. The capture of prisoners was extremely routine and it was found they were seldom a danger. They were often simply directed to the rear where they were collected and transported. This Landser has strapped his anti-gas sheet (Gasplane) case to his gasmask case. It was supposed to be fastened to the front of the gasmask case's shoulder strap. Strapping the Gasplane tightly to the gasmask case could damage it.



A 3.7mm PaK35/36 antitank gun crew cracks rounds over open sighting directly into a Soviet position. The wide leather strap over the gunner's shoulder is a hauling sling (Schieppriemen) used to help manhandle a gun into position. It has a large snap-hook on the lower end at hip-level that clipped into hauling ropes. The crew wears rubber bands (Gummiband) cut from vehicle inner tubes on their mud-smeared helmets.



Pontoon ferries were a primary means of crossing vehicles and troops over river. They could be placed in operation faster than a pontoon bridge, required fewer pontoons, and were less vulnerable to air attack than a fixed floating bridge as the ferries could be dispersed. Crossing was a slower process than a bridge of course. These appear to be medium pontoons—Brückengerät "T." In the foreground a Gefreiter (left) and an Obergefreiter and other soldiers rest.

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This view of a German sentry was taken from inside a former Soviet concrete bunker through its steel hatch on the so called Molotov Line. These bunkers were few in number and widely scattered in most areas mainly covering roads.



In addition to brutal winters, heavy rains, seas of mud, clouds of flies and mosquitoes, and water shortages, another seasonal blight was summer dust storms. Cyclists (Radfahrer) were assigned to reconnaissance units and equipped with robust troop bicycles Truppenfahrräder, what the troops called a bicycle (Fahrrad) or bike (Rad). Couriers also used bicycles.



An Obergefreiter in a lookout post (Feldwachstelle) peers through a 6x30 Sf.14Z scissors binoculars (Scherenfernrohr), known as Eselsohren (donkey ears) for obvious reasons. Normally mounted on a high tripod, it was supplied with a spike to drive into wood or masonry for mounting in difficult positions. The Leutnant next to him with a microphone is a war correspondent recording a frontline narrative.

This observation post (Beobachtungsstelle) situated on the bend of a river has the luxury of sandbags (Sandsäcke) as part of its overhead cover. Seldom were sandbags available to frontline troops. They had to rely on digging holes and available local materials. Here boards from nearby houses have been used for the roof cover and trench revetments.



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Rifle platoon troops move forward passing the company troop (Kompanietrupp), the company headquarters. Radio operators, medics with red cross armbands, and messengers can be seen. Messengers used bicycles where the terrain permitted.



Considered obsolete soon after the beginning of World War II, cavalry (Kavallerie) units were found useful on the Eastern Front, mainly because of the vast distances to be covered and also because of vehicle and fuel shortages. Horses were also useful in rough terrain where vehicles had difficult traversing, if they were able to move over it at all. Horse units were also designated mounted (Reiter). Most mounted units had been converted to reconnaissance units, some still with horse-mounted elements, but new horse units were raised to fight on the Eastern Front such as Armee-Reiter-Regimenter 1-3.





The crew of a 3.7cm PaK35/36 antitank gun gets an assist. Rather than manhandling the 970-pound (440-kilogram) gun to its position by themselves they have hitched a horse to the gun and lift the trails off the ground as the horse is led forward.

Crossing large rivers were a major operation, but another frequent challenge was crossing the countless smaller streams. While many of these could be forded, few German tactical transport vehicles possessed four-wheel drive or had fording kits allowing them to ford water more than a foot or two deep.



An 8cm mGrW34 mortar troop prepares to fire smoke rounds in support of the advance. Smoke rounds, like high explosive, were maroon and looked identical externally, but were marked with a white "Nb" for Nebel. German 8cm high explosive and smoke rounds were the same weight and had the same ballistics allowing the rounds to be mixed in the same barrage without having to calculate different firing data. Maximum effective range was 1,900 meters and the minimum range 60 meters.





The Germans employed Shepard dogs as messengers (Meldehunde). They required two handlers, one with the subunit and another at the headquarters. Dogs also saw limited service carrying medical supplies in special saddlebag-like pouches. His carbine is fitted with a muzzle protective cap.



Because of their size larger cities were faired better than small towns, although large areas could be destroyed. Here motorcyclists take the opportunity to clean up in a town's public well. Rubberized over-boots were issued with the motorcyclist's protective suit, but were apparently not available here. Production of marching boots (Marschstiefel), what the Landser called disc-shakers (Knobelbecher) or toss pots (Würfelbecher), ceased in 1942 and low-topped, laced field service shoes (Schnürschuhe) began to be issued to conserve leather. Marching boots continued to worn until they wore out.

This Oberleutnant and Oberfeldwebel are probably the company commander (Kompaniechef) and reporting NCO designated a Hauptfeldwebel (chief field sergeant). The Landser traditionally referred to him as der Spieß (the pike—often translated as "the spear.") In much earlier times NCO carried pikes to keep troops in the line. The company reporting NCO was the equivalent of a US company first sergeant or Commonwealth company sergeant major.







Fuel troops (Betriebsstofftruppen) fill 20-liter (5.05-gallon) cans at a captured Soviet fuel depot. The Wehrmachtskanister (Defense Forces container) was officially called a Benzinkanister (gasoline container) or Wasserkkanister (water container). The US and Britain copied them calling them Jerry or Blitz cans. The Germans began producing it in 1937 copying it from an Italian design. Fuel containers were marked "Kraftstoff" (motor fuel) and water containers were marked "Wasser" and usually additionally identified by a large painted white cross or "X." Fuel containers for Winterkraftstoff (winter motor fuel) were identified by a small white "W." The cans were usually field gray or dark yellow, but units often painted them different colors for camouflage purposes. 200-liter (52-gallon) steel drums were also used to transport fuel.



Each grenadier company was provided a bugler (Hornist); some traditions are hard to break. In garrison the German Army used bugle calls to signal the day's activities and events. In the field bugles were used for signaling and conveying orders. While not apparent here, the signal bugle (Signalhorn), smaller than a trumpet, was entirely wrapped (except the bell and mouthpiece) with a long, thin strip of field gray cloth.

Two NCOs, an Unteroffizier and Feldwebel, wearing motorcycle protective suits search a Red Army soldier. Often rank shoulder straps were dispensed with on this suit. They were made of a grayish green rubberized fabric with field gray cloth collars. The Unteroffizier is armed with an MP40 and is fortunate enough to possess two three-pocket magazine pouches. Often only one pouch was available. The Soviets used a simple rucksack, merely a cloth bag with a tie cord securing it.





Red Army prisoners of war await the order to move out to the rear. They would be herded into large barbed wire enclosures on the open steppe without any form of shelter or facilities. Most died of starvation, exposure, illness, and disease. Between Germany and the Soviet Union the Geneva Convention (Genfer Konvention) was ignored.



Caught in the act, Russian civilians are apprehended stealing corn; probably a posed photograph. They will no doubt be treated as partisans, which the Germans referred to with the euphemism Banditen (bandits) along with included bewaffnete bander (armed gangs), Bolschewik Aufwiegler (Bolshevik agitators), and Saboteure (saboteurs).

Anti-partisan operations were distasteful and brutal. No Russian civilian could be trusted. Here an Obergrenadier searches two youthful partisans. He has removed an RGD33 Degtyarev hand grenade from one. Their fate is sealed. The Germans wear white armbands for friend-or-foe identification. Even at short ranges in the forest such identification was necessary when fighting partisans in civilian clothes.



Bunkering down for the winter. Rear service troops put the finishing touches on their winter home; their dwelling bunker (Wohnbunker). These could be quite elaborate. Here glass window panes from a Russian building seal the windows. Even railings on the steps have been installed. Obviously located deep in the rear, the earth they are tamping on the timber roof is more for insulation than protection from artillery.





Kradschützen (motorcycle riflemen) share Zigaretten-Ersatz (substitute cigarettes) during a rest halt. To keep cigarettes and matches dry, they were often stowed in the steel gasmask case (Tragbüchse für Gasmaske) contrary to regulations. The Landser referred to the case simply as a Zigarettenbüchse (cigarette box).



A grenadier prepares a concentrated charge (Geballte Ladung), a field expedient charge was used as an antitank weapon or for blasting bunkers. It was made up by securely taping or wiring six stick grenade heads (with detonators and handles removed) around a complete central stick grenade. It was thrown into tank treads or on the top of the turret or engine compartment. The charge could break a track or penetrate up to 60mm of armor if placed hard against it. He is standing outside his kleinen Hauses (little house), a small dugout shelter (Unterschlupf).



Some of these men wear wool greatcoats (Mantel). The second man from the right wears the one-piece rubberized waterproof and windproof protective suit for motorcyclists (Schutzmantel für Kraftradfahrer). The Landser simply called it a Kradmantel. A magazine pocket can be seen on the back edge of his pistol holster. The P08 and P38 pistols were issued with two eight-round magazines. 9mm pistol ammunition was issued in 16-round cartons to accommodate the two magazines. For this reason MP38 and MP40 machine pistols had 32-round magazines to prevent wastage.





This mortar troop (Granatwerfertrupp) relaxes in their position beside their 8cm mGrW34 medium mortar. Prior to 1942 it was designated the sGrW34—schwerer Granatwerfer—heavy mortar. It was redesignated the mGrW34—mittlerer Granatwerfer when the 12cm schwerer Granatwerfer sGrW42 was introduced. The German 8cm mortar was actually 81mm. It appears the mortar has been whitewashed, but it may be dark yellow. The mortar rounds (Werfergranate 34) are maroon and the metal cases field gray.



An MG34 machine gun troop prepares to move out. They wear rather grubby reversible winter suits with the formerly "white" sides out. These uniforms were worn continuously through the winter with virtually no opportunities to wash them. They quickly became filthy. By early spring and snowmelt this was actually an advantage and they blended into the mud and snow, and became dirtier still. A platoon of Tiger I tanks perch on the ridge in the distance.

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Troops wearing reversible winter suits take a rest break during the advance. A short rest break was called a Feuerpause (firebreak), the formal term for "cease-fire." Two radio operators have set-up their TornFud2 backpacked radio. While backpacked it could not be operated on the move. A radio operator was referred to as a Funker, roughly equating to "Sparks." A radio is a Funk, derived from Funke (spark).

A Landser peers through a locally made fixed periscope set in a trench wall. He wears a wool knit field gray torque or head-protector (Kopfschützer) under his helmet. The uninsulated steel helmet was extremely cold and by itself offered no protection from the cold nor retained heat. The top of men's ears would freeze to the helmet's ear protectors. To prevent this, retain warmth, and protect the exposed portion of the head, the torque, an open-ended knit tube, was worn. Often two were worn with one protecting the neck and could be pulled up over the face.



Grenadiere man a hasty defensive position. With light snow on the ground a dug-in position such as this was extremely conspicuous with its freshly turned soil. Identification stripe in the color of the day can be seen on some men.





A dug-in defensive position amidst a blizzard. Hand grenades had to be protected from extreme cold. These lying in the snow may not operate as the friction-igniter and pull-cord froze easily. In the background is a factory and mine tailings pile.



It appears that the Unteroffizier is warning the soldier that he is about to loose a stick grenade. The soldier is going on sentry duty wearing a fur hide Wachmantel (guard greatcoat), or what the Landsers called a Steppenmantel (steppe greatcoat).



Sentry duty required exposure to the elements and was brutal for even the one-hour shift they stood. The value of wool torques and fun-lined guard overcoats can be appreciated.



This sentry stands guard in his exposed position armed with a 7.92mm Kar98k carbine and stick hand grenades. The ration tin, with a wire handle attached, contains either hot coals or heated rocks. It would be brought out from his group's bunker (Gruppenunterstand) to warm his hands. Knit wool gloves were often all that were available to protect the hands with insulated mittens in short supply.

Two Landser put the finishing touches on their rifleman's firing hole (Schützenloch). This one is revetted by rock and spoil has been piled to the rear. An entrance step is in the rear of the position beside the Landser. An MG34 machine gun rests to the parapet. Late in the war rifle groups were often provided a second machine gun owing to the broader fronts units had to defend with fewer men. Some groups even had three machine guns.



A machine gunner scans his sector for enemy movements. Even in daylight enemy scouts and snipers attempted to move in close to German lines. A wide variety of binoculars were used by the Germans including captured and impounded makes. The most common was the ~~the 6x30 Doppelfernrohr~~ or Fernglas), what the Landser simply called a Dienstglas (service glass).





This MG34 machine gun position (Schützenloch für leichtes Maschinengewehr), or "machine gun hole" (Maschinengewehrloch) commands a good field of fire. A generous supply of stick hand grenades is near at hand. In the right foreground is a metal case for two spare machine gun barrels. The Landser referred to a machine gun as a chopped meat machine (Hackfleischmaschine) or straw-chopper (Häckselschneider).

The group's ammunition man (Munitionsschütze) arrives with another 250-round can of machine gun ammunition. The gunner scans for targets from the position. The entry trench oriented straight into the position was exposed, especially in an elevated position, to mortar and artillery fragmentation bursting behind the position.



In the spring and fall the land turned to mud. In the spring it was caused by the massive snowmelt coupled with rain and in the fall by the ceaseless heavy rains, what the Russians called the Rasputitza, the "big mud." The term was adopted by the Germans. This soldier is attaching a cable in an effort to winch a bogged down vehicle out. He wears a shelter-quarter (Zeltbahn) as a rain smock. The bundle of sticks is an aid to extract a mud-bound vehicle by placing them under the tires to provide traction.



Pack mules and horses were used extensively on the Eastern Front. Anything with wheels was pressed into service. Here a wooden-spoked wheel If 8 infantry cart is towed in tandem behind the steel-wheeled, rubber-tired. Two to four could be drawn by a single horse if the load was not too great. These little carts were used by platoons and companies to carry equipment, supplies, ammunition, and crew-served weapons.



Troops pass an artillery-blasted Soviet concrete bunker. The tangle of wire mesh and reinforcing bars supported camouflage and prevented hand-delivered demolition charges and grenades from being thrown in. Some of the passing soldiers are stooped over carrying heavy radio equipment.



Kameraden. Two Kradschützen (motorcycle riflemen) share a smoke. The Germans had a number of single-stanza soldier's songs to buoy up their spirits at difficult times. One example goes: If one of us grows tied, the other stands the watch; if one of us should doubt, the other faithfully laughs. If one of us should fall, the other stands for two, for to every soldier God gave a comrade-in-arms.



Motorcycle rifle battalions (Kradschützen-Bataillone) were assigned to motorized infantry and panzer divisions. The companies were organized along the line of a rifle company, but were equipped with some 50 combination motorcycles with sidecars and a few solo motorcycles. The three platoons each had three 12-man groups with four combination motorcycles, two of which mounted an MG34 machine gun.



A war correspondent (Kriegsberichterstatter), a Gefreiter, snaps photographs at the front. They were assigned to Propagandakompanien attached to armies. The cuff band is embroidered Propagandakompanie in silver Gothic letters on a black backing. Regulations prescribed that the band be worn on the right cuff though. Note the tangle of Soviet barbed wire. It has considerably more barbs than commonly found.



Pioneers were issued long wire cutters (lange Drahtzangen). While heavy and bulky, they allowed a soldier to quickly slash his way through barbed wire. Bangalore torpedoes, which the Germans called a tube charge (Rohrladung) were not always available nor was there always time to fabricate pole charges (Stangenladung). These were made from a number of stick grenade heads (handles removed, but detonators inserted) or 200-gram demolition charges (200-g Sprengkörper 28) wired or taped to a plank, pole, or tree limb at approximately 10-15cm (4-6-inch) intervals.



The assault group closes in to finish off the bunker. The second man from the left carries a Flammenwerfer 35. Only pioneer troops (Pioniertruppen) were issued flamethrowers, six to a company. The light colored bags carried by the other group members are grenade carriers made from sandbags. Four or five stick grenades were carried in such bags. There were also purpose-made carrying pouches for hand grenades (Tragetaschen für Handgranaten) issued in pairs.



A heavy demolition charge explodes after the pioneer assault group had breached the barbed wire obstacle and threw a 10-kilogram concentrated charge (Geballte Ladung 10-kg) through the firing port. The group's light machine is probably covering the assault group from the rear.

Flammenwerfer 35 weighed 35.8 kilograms (79 pounds) when filled with 11.8 liters (11.5 gallons) of fuel oil. The small cylinder contained the compressed nitrogen propellant. It was produced until 1941 after a light model was introduced in 1940, but the Flammenwerfer 35 remained in use through the war.



The Flammenwerfer 35 had a burn duration of only 10 seconds. It was usually fired in two to three-second bursts. The trigger simultaneously released the fuel stream and ignited it. The target could not be "wetted down" with an un-ignited fuel spray and then a short flame shot fired to ignite it. The inability to do this wasted fuel. The Germans did not use thickened fuel and this limited the weapon's range to 25-30 meters, often shorter.





A group leader conducts a visual reconnaissance of his unit's route to the high ground they are to occupy. His equipment includes the cook pot (Kochgeschirr 31), shelter-quarter (Zeltbahn 31), carrying case for gasmask (Tragebüchse für Gasmaske 41), canteen and drinking cup (Feldflasche 31 und Trinkbecher), bread bag (Brotbeutel 31), and a budging report/map case (Meldekartentasche 35).

A rifle group plunges into a wall of smoke laid by mortars to cover their movement. The Germans made heavy use of the French-developed Berger mixture as a smoke generating compound. It had a high concentration of zinc, which was harmful to breath over the long term. They laid smoke screens to blind the enemy or screen their own movements using artillery, mortars, smoke pots, and grenades. Referred to as Nebel (smoke), the word is sometimes misinterpreted as "fog." Nebel is a word for fog, but in the military context it means screening smoke.



The Germans used several types of hand-delivered smoke devices. These included the: Smoke hand grenades 1939 and 1939B (Nebelhandgranaten 39 und 39B), the same design as the stick hand grenade 1924.

Smoke hand grenade 1941 (Nebelhandgranate 41), essentially a handleless smoke grenade 1939.

Smoke egg hand grenade 1942 (Nebeleierhandgranate 42), an elongated egg-shaped grenade.

Fume cylinder smoke 1939 (Rauchrohr-Nebel 39), a tube-like smoke device.

Smoke candles 1939 and 1939B (Nebelkerzen 39 und 39B), small smoke pots.

These devices were either field gray or dark green, usually with a broken white band and "Nb" in white. They burned either white or gray-white smoke.



As the Germans were forced westward by the Red Army they adopted a scorched earth policy as the Soviets had done as they were driven before the advancing Germans. Here a special railroad car has been fitted with a railroad tie ripper. The car was heavily weighted and pulled rapidly tearing apart the ties. Railroad and security troops look on. Being second line troops they are armed with 7.92mm Kar98b "carbines." The Versailles Treaty restricted Germany from producing rifles, only carbines. In the early 1920s World War I Gew98 rifles were modernized and redesignated "carbines" although they retained the old long rifle-length barrels.



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A peasant's log cabin burns, set alit by retreating Germans. This was part of the scorched earth policy, to leave nothing for the Red Army and to hopefully slow its advance. Brush and forest fires were also set to flush out partisans or to blind the enemy or screen troop movements.



Only combat units were provided the modern Hf.7/11 large combat wagon (große Kampfwagen). It had a steel body and rubber ties. Behind the side panels were storage compartments. They were drawn by two horses and could carry 1.5 tons of cargo. The wagons were usually camouflage-painted on the exterior and the interior of the cargo bed was field gray. Note the paper stripes glued to the apartment block's windows.

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A troop column worms its way through a devastated town. To the Landsers they all merged together. It was seldom that he understood where in the Eastern Front he was or what contribution his unit was giving to the big picture. Towns were bombarded by air and artillery by both sides. Little was left standing.







Apparently under artillery fire, a Sanitation soldier—medical aidman (Sanitäter) treats a man's leg wound. They were also called a Sani and identified by a red cross armband on the left upper arm. They carried basic medical supplies and dressings in two leather belt pouches (Sanitätstaschen) similar in appearance to rifle ammunition pouches, but larger.



Slit trenches were dug even considerable distances behind the frontline for protection of artillery and air attack. They were habitually very narrow making them smaller targets, often only half a meter wide. In the background is what appears to be a Kfz.17 cross-country car.



The loader (Ladeschütze) of this 8cm mGrW34 mortar is wearing the earlier issue tunic with the dark bottle green-faced collar. His Obergefreiter chevrons are also backed by dark green badge cloth. The Gefreiter next to him wears a later issue tunic without dark green collar facing. His rank chevron is backed by field gray cloth.





The assault gunner Obergefreiter displays four Special Badges for the Close Combat of a Tank by Single Combat Germany (Sonderabzeichen für das Niederkämpfen von Panzerkampfwagen durch Einzelkämpfer). The badge, awarded for knocking out a tank with hand weapons such as hand and rifle grenades, hand mines, the Panzerfaust, or Panzerschreck was instituted on 9 March 1942, but eligibility was backdated to the invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941. His other decorations include the Iron Cross 1st Class on his breast, Iron Cross 2nd Class (buttonhole ribbon), and the Armor Battle Badge in bronze for assault gun units (tank units were given the badge in gold). Assault gun troops (Sturmgeschütztruppen) wore a field gray version of the black panzer troops' uniform. Collar patches varied widely between units and even within units as regulations changes, were interpreted differently, or if the unit was assigned to the Panzerwaffe or the artillery. Here the tabs are field gray with red piping displaying the Totenkopf (death head).



A grenadier crouches in the entrance to his dugout checking his weapons. He holds a Panzerfaust 60, which was introduced in the summer of 1944. It had been preceded by two versions of the Panzerfaust 30 in October 1943. The numbers indicated the effective range in meters. His Kar98k carbine is fitted with a Schießbecher Gewehrgranatgerät (rifle grenade equipment). Note the helmets sitting on the lip of the entrance for rapid donning. The grenadier wears the winter uniform with what appears to be the "water-pattern" camouflage side out.



A partly camouflaged 8.8cm PaK43/41 antitank gun hidden among low brush. While a deadly weapon, the big ungainly weapon was difficult to conceal and relocate to an alternate position and required considerable time and effort to dig in; all factors that reduced its survivability. The awkward weapon was nicknamed the Scheunentor (barn door).

The two men in the foreground wear reversible winter uniforms with the three-color splinter-pattern camouflage side out. The Unteroffizier (corporal) in the background wears a tunic made of shelter-quarter camouflage fabric. Barely discernable on his left shoulder just above the Panzerfaust 60 tube is the single light green stripe on a black backing indicating his rank, a special insignia for camouflage clothing. Panzerfäuste were usually dark yellow (often called "ordnance tan"), but may have been field gray as well.





A Pionier prepares a Goliath leichte Ladungsträger (light charge carrier) Sd.Kfz.302 Ausf.A. These small vehicles were remotely-controlled via a cable and intended to breach obstacles, destroy fortifications, and attack tanks with a 60-kilogram (132-pound) TNT demolition charge. They were less than successful in the latter role as tanks could maneuver out of the way and the Goliaths were vulnerable to machine gun fire. There was also a radio-controlled Goliath Sd.Kfz.303 with larger explosive charges. The brush piles served to conceal the operator and waiting Goliaths.



At the front soldiers were rather relaxed regarding the wear of the reversible winter suit. Here one wears it with the white side out, another with the water-pattern camouflage side out, and one wears splinter-pattern camouflage trousers and the light gray jacket, both of which would be white on the reverse side. Headgear varies widely as well. A Pz.Kpfw.IV tank sits in the background.



A combination (Beiwagenkraf) and solo (Solokrad) motorcycles pause beside a road. Road spray caused ice to form on the Kradschützen's protective suits. By March 1943 most Kradschützen units were disbanded with their assets absorbed into Panzergrenadier units.





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